United Nations A/HRC/31/NGO/11

General Assembly

Distr.: General
16 February 2016

English only

Human Rights Council
Thirty-first session
Agenda item 3
Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development

Written statement* submitted by Khiam Rehabilitation Center for Victims of Torture, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[01 February 2016]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

GE.16-02170(E)

Please recycle

Violations of Ashuraa in Bahrain in 2015

The Bahraini authorities escalated the oppression procedures against the Bahraini Shiites faction, a component of the Bahraini society which commemorates the religious festival of Ashuraa in many regions in 2015. We've monitored, within the period 15 October – 2 November 2015, the following violations: 24 regions are attacked to remove banners relevant to Ashuraa celebration. Banners are either removed, or demolished and sometimes people faced restrictions while trying to hung banners. In 40 cases, the security forces confiscated or demolished the banners, while 7 harassment attempts took place in a trial to hang the banners. In 62 cases, some religious scholars including 6 poets and chanters were summoned. Three people were detained arbitrarily and 12 people were abused. The reason for most of the summons was to pose restrictions on the sermons. The security authorities posed restrictions on the administrations of mosques and 20 people were summoned. There are 169 cases where the Bahraini authorities breached the freedom of religion or belief. The result of oppressing the peaceful protests, which condemn the Bahraini authorities' violations of Ashuraa rituals, was the injury of 45 persons due to the use of the internationally-prohibited bullets and gas bombs in four Bahraini regions.

The Bahraini authorities manipulated the media statements of the Gaafari Endowment Administration, the Northern Municipality, and the Ministry of Interior to mislead the international opinion about the reality of the religious oppression encountered by the Shiites in Bahrain. In addition, the National Institution of Human Rights failed to show a stance against the violations of the freedom of religion within this period.

We recommend the following:

1- Allowing the UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief to visit Bahrain to conduct an investigation on the reasons of religious oppression and advise the Bahraini government to solve the problem of persecuting the Shiites citizens.

2- The UN contribution in assisting Bahrain to develop practical plans and legal procedures to terminate the persecution of the Shiites by sending an ad hoc group which is concerned with helping the countries that are suffering from discrimination and persecution against national, religious, and ethnic groups.

3- Allowing the UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of peaceful gatherings Mayna Kyay to visit Bahrain to help the government to eliminate the violation of the right to peaceful gatherings for religious purposes, which is ensured by Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and to assist in eliminating banning the peaceful social and political gatherings, a phenomenon which appeared a year ago.

4- Stopping the manipulation of laws to restrict the rights that are internationally ensured.